

## The Hidden Village Oni Sisters EX Blessing Day Part 2



Translator: Remonwater

Thanks typesetter anon/usterm for transcribing. So this is the last part of the set of birthday stories. I really enjoyed translating all of them. I feel like February will be my favorite month of the year for some years. I'm looking forward to next year's birthday stories, or actually Rem would have to be awake for them to be possible. I hope she's awake by then so that the stories can be possible. Anyways from now on I'll be working on the Rem and Ram back story for quite a while, since it's 300 pages. Subaru not

being involved in it is a bit regretting, since a big reason why I love Rem is because of the dynamic between them, but I look forward to translating it regardless. I want to know and translate everything about Rem anyways. While I'm working on that, if any other Rem content pops up, I'll take a break from it and I'll work on that instead. This includes things like the Rem in konosuba short story that will come out in April I think? As long as I get the scans for it that will be worked on. And if anything happens to Rem in the new WN chapters, including things that aren't her waking up, I'll take a break and work on those as well. And of course if she wakes up I'm going to translate those no matter what at all costs.

And one small side note, I'd prefer people to call me Remonwater or Remon, not lemonwater(I'm looking at you, typesetter anon!). I want to associate myself with Rem in every way possible, and I want to make it absolutely clear who I'm translating for. I might even change my site domain, if I do I should get it to redirect properly though. I want it to be as clear as day, because if I'm not doing it for her, then I wouldn't be able to do it. Ah, but I want to try and do an AI story or two eventually since it was a request. I don't know when that'll happen though. I love Rem

[Ram: Let's celebrate.]

—is what Ram said a few days ago.

Ram's sudden proposal caused all of the Roswaal residence(excluding one person), to get jumbled in immense chaos and suspicion, including Subaru.

However, he was enlightened and he nodded because now her true motive was clear.

[Ram: I want to celebrate Rem's birthday. This year is special for that girl.]

Subaru immediately raised a white flag in response to Ram's profile full of rare affection. It couldn't be helped. He completely gave in to help her. He couldn't handle that sort of look.

Besides, he nodded to many parts of Ram's point.

Being someone that undervalued herself too much and was humble about everything, Rem even managed to forget about her own birthday. Could she really forget about that anniversary, even when it was also her beloved older sister's birthday?

Basically, that day was the only matter she unconsciously avoided.

[Subaru: But, she can't. Avoiding celebrating your own birthday? There's no way that's possible.]

Subaru could not believe in Rem's unconsciousness, and he wholeheartedly approved of Ram's suggestion.

Birthday—if there was a reason to celebrate that, then you could even put it as a way to show gratitude. He was always in Rem's care. He also insisted on that repayment.

However, Subaru didn't put it like that, and he didn't think of it like that, either. There was no need for such forced reasoning.

Because a birthday is for celebration. It was the best day that happened once a year when you could ask for selfish things.

It was something that didn't have any special reason. That's what Subaru believed.

It was common sense that he took with him, despite it being a different world. He wanted Rem to ask for whatever she wanted with confidence.

She had that right. Everyone living in the Roswaal residence came to that conclusion.

—Actually, putting it as a bundle called “everyone” would be somewhat misleading.

The truth was that not everyone in this mansion was on board with the idea.

On the contrary, there was only one person that was clearly against it.

It wasn't even Roswaal, someone who you could never tell what he was thinking. It wasn't even Beatrice, who would try to oppose the mansion's events at first. It wasn't even Emilia, who Subaru enjoyed while oddly explaining his strange festivals that he proposed. Incidentally, it wasn't Puck, either. And of course, it wasn't Ram, as she was the one that came up with it.

Which meant that it could be only one other person—it was none other than Rem herself.

[Rem: I'm so happy that Nee-sama and Subaru-kun put in so much effort for me. I'm lucky. Those feelings alone are enough to fill my heart. That's why you really don't need to do this. Anyways, let's celebrate Nee-sama's birthday!]

[Subaru: What do you mean “anyways”!?!]

Subaru shouted at the empty sky without thinking, but Rem did not change her mind at all, in regards to her habit of being modest.

However, there was a but.

Cancelling her birthday party this year because Rem herself declined—Subaru was against accepting a development like that obediently.

And so Ram was also in agreement, as she literally wanted to spoil her beloved sister. Subaru and Ram's opinion matched in regards to this issue. They were complete accomplices.

The two of them wanted to somehow celebrate Rem. They simply just had that iron will.

However, it wasn't as if that was Subaru's only motive. That's right. While looking at the profile of his accomplice, he thought about things.

The restraint and deep affection. The hidden plan and the decision. What would happen in the mansion because of all that?

—It was the beginning of an honorless, inhumane, and violent mutual celebration.

## 2

[Ram: Stubborn Rem is cute, but it'll become a stalemate at this rate.]

Ram let out a sigh listlessly, sitting on the bed of the room while having her thin arms crossed.

In front of her, Subaru looked up at the ceiling in agreement, puzzling over the same issue. Subaru was used to seeing this ceiling, but it was his room, so if you were to say that it was something natural, then yes, it was.

It was becoming the time in the afternoon when he had a break during work. That was when Subaru and Ram met and groaned together in the room.

Needless to say, the item on the agenda was the nearest birthday that was getting closer.

[Ram: At first, I thought Rem was convinced with how she reacted when we talked about the birthday celebration.....]

[Subaru: It seemed like she was going to accept it with the atmosphere, but for her to immediately revise it, that sure is like Rem. It was her usual habit of being restrained, but her humility is a problem, too.]

[Ram: Quit talking like it's somebody else's problem. That girl cowered because Barusu was being presumptuous and had to go stick his nose in. You lack self-awareness.]

[Subaru: Agh.....well, it's not like I can deny it.]

Ram sighed at Subaru in the silence, him looking away as he admitted his mistakes awkwardly.

—Rem's delicate birthday party refusal came out the day after Ram announced the holding for her birthday party.

When Ram spilled the beans about wanting to have a birthday celebration for Rem, Rem was moved to tears because of her sister's kindness, and she showed her gratitude. Everyone thought that the birthday party would be held for sure with those events.

[Subaru: Who would've thought Rem could break down when we asked her things like what she wants and what she wants us to do.....]

[Ram: Not could, she *did* break down. I made a mistake of not putting an end to it, too. I should've known with Rem's delicacy and Barusu's uselessness.]

Ram's sharp speaking causes Subaru to drop his shoulders, heartbroken.

Just this one time, Subaru gave up on objecting. Ram's opinion was correct, at least for those points. Subaru was truly partly involved with Rem's change of heart. And on top of that, it was a big part, too.

Consequently, they were having trouble persuading Rem, being someone who showed a tendency to be modest.

[Subaru: It would be great if Rem could reconsider it before the upcoming big day in the near future. If the worst comes to the worst, we also have the option of having a guerrilla warfare sort of birthday party, but I'm not sure what a guerilla warfare birthday party would even be.]

[Ram: Nevermind the big day, it would have to be done very well anyway. Also.....]

Then, Ram stopped criticizing him, and instead she took a glance behind Subaru. Subaru follows her eyes, and he understood what caught her attention.

He understood that she was interested in the desk that was there. Or to put it more precisely, it was something placed on top of it.

[Subaru: This is a cracker that I made myself. It is instant, but it's necessary for a party.]

[Ram: A cracker.....]

Subaru handed over a cracker as big as his palm to Ram, seeing how she was interested. She accepts it and gazes at it closely. It was something that rolled up cardboard into the shape of a cone, and the circular part was covered with a lid. Rubber was stretched out from the pointy part, and Ram was pulling on it lightly with her fingers.

[Ram: What is this toy used for?]

[Subaru: Really, you're gonna call it a toy? Well, you've grasped what it really is, though.]

However, as you'd expect, it seemed like Ram didn't do any further analysis of it.

The cracker gets put back by Ram, who frankly did not understand its purpose, and then Subaru looked at her in a bit of a mischievous way. And then—

[Subaru: —Take this!]

With the sound of rubber snapping, white confetti fell down with Ram as its target.

[——]

Contrary to its size, a pretty large amount of pieces of paper fell onto Ram's head. This unexpected effect makes Ram's big eyes open wide, and Subaru smiles at that satisfying reaction.

The instant cracker was something Subaru made all by himself, including the confetti inside of it. The knowledge he gained a long time ago from watching an educational program on TV proved to be useful. He was very grateful for the glasses guy.

[Subaru: What'cha think? Surprised you, right? It's a gem that's safe for children without gunpowder, and on top of that, it's even ecologically considerate since you can reuse it however many times you want.]

[Ram: .....I see.]

Ram responds to Subaru's explanation, him acting prideful, by smiling after whispering with a low voice. For some reason, Subaru felt strange chills because of that lovely smile. While smiling at Subaru, him shuddering, she pinched a piece of paper on her head.

[Ram: This is a clever idea you'd expect from Barusu. I'll praise you for this, except for the fact that you showered me with it and you covered the room in paper waste.]

[Subaru: Be more straightforward with your praise! I'm sorry! It's standard to aim it at people! And if you're gonna call it paper waste, don't make it worse than scraps of paper!]

Subaru picks up a broom and dustpan at the corner of the room while defending himself against Ram's abuse.

He had tools ready to collect confetti because he was making crackers on his own and he test fired them several times in his room. He quickly picks up the scattered confetti, and he put it back into the cracker.

Now the loading was complete. It was an ecological good considerate of the environment and safety.

[Ram: Barusu, wait.]

[Subaru: Hm?]

Ram held her hand out to Subaru, who had been blowing his own horn, to tell him to hand her a cracker. When Subaru obediently accepted that request, Ram looked at the cracker she received and said

[Ram: .....Did you test this a lot, Barusu?]

[Subaru: It was a performance test, too. Oh, you want to try it now too? I do understand how you feel, though.]

[Ram: So you basically showered me with scraps of paper scattered on the floor along with stuff like dust and garbage.]

[———]

Subaru gets overpowered by Ram's tone of voice, and he looked away.

[Subaru: .....I guess...you can...put it...like that?]

He did consider safety and the ecology of it, but he may have been lacking in the cleanliness department. It seemed they had different viewpoints on the matter of reusing confetti that fell on the floor.

[Ram: Barusu.]

Subaru responds to the low calling by nervously looking back at her. He met the eyes of Ram smiling.

With a smile, she aimed the cracker at him.

—With the sound of a snap, Subaru's vision became pure white.

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With this and that, his conversation with Ram that may or may not have been productive ended.

Subaru walked unsteadily out of the room, and now he was heading towards the dining hall. It was unrelated to his meeting in his room with Ram, and he had another promise.

And then, when he slid into the dining hall with stealthy footsteps, he—

[Rem: —I've been waiting, Subaru-kun. Here, come here.]

[Subaru: S—so—sorry for making you wait. I ran into a bit of trouble shaking off Nee-sama.]

Subaru gets greeted by a sweet, warm smell and a soft voice, and he said that while scratching his head. The one who shook her head in response to Subaru's words was Rem, who had been waiting for Subaru in the dining hall.

Right after his private talk with Ram, Subaru met up with Rem, who he arranged a meeting with.

Of course, there was a reason for this secret rendezvous that was out of everyone's sight.

[Rem: So Subaru-kun, did it go fine with Nee-sama?]

[Subaru: Don't worry. As of now, it seems she hasn't noticed our plan. She's been deceived perfectly.]

[Rem: That makes me feel relieved. But, we can't be careless. Nee-sama is perfect even in those kind of insights. Evading Nee-sama's eyes is probably next to impossible for me, and even Subaru.]

[Subaru: You have so much faith in Nee-sama that our precautions are going to waste.]

That said, Rem's assessment of her sister wasn't a complete exaggeration.

In actuality, Ram's insight was not something to make light of. It was especially responsive to evil schemes. And so Subaru also had to be very careful to try and keep up an appearance during his conversation with Ram.

—Because at any rate, Subaru and Rem were working together to plan a conspiracy with Ram as the opponent.

[Rem: I'm so happy that Nee-sama and Subaru-kun want to celebrate me. But, I can't just neglect Nee-sama because of that.]

[Subaru: That's why we're planning a counter surprise without letting Ram know. It's a plot where Rem and I will be the instigators, and we'll play a trick on Nee-sama while her guard is down!]

[Rem: Yes, as expected, Subaru-kun's ideas are the best in the whole world. At first, when Subaru-kun proposed this idea to me, I couldn't stop trembling from how devious it was.]

[Subaru: 'Devious' you say, I guess the evil in me just got a bit stronger.....]

[Rem: —?]

Rem tilted her head curiously in response to Subaru sighing, unsure of whether it was praise or not.

Anyhow, on the other side of Rem's birthday party event, they were actually secretly working on a surprise birthday party plan for Ram. Subaru and Rem meeting at the dining hall like this was linked to that surprise plan, but there was another purpose for it besides having a secret talk. That was—

[Rem: This is a way for me to show my gratitude towards Nee-sama. Although, it is a mere token.]

Rem made a humble pose, but Subaru reflexively swallowed his spit in reaction to the scene before him.

There was the cause of the sweet aroma that filled the room. Various sorts of sweets were lined up on the table. He could see the degree of Rem's enthusiasm with those sweets that needed more than just the fingers of both her hands.

[Subaru: If this is a mere token, then Rem's gratitude seems to be infinite.]

[Rem: My feelings towards Nee-sama are infinite, after all.]

The way she threw her chest out with a little pride as she said "Humph!" looked lovely. He smiled seeing Rem talk about Ram because she was someone who would often act unconfidently.

Ram also looked the same when she talked about Rem.

[Subaru: Alright, how about I get a taste of a part of those endless feelings for my incompetent self.]

[Rem: Sure! There are plenty of things that haven't been tried yet, so please tell me your honest opinion.]

Rem bows, and she waited next to Subaru, who headed towards the table. And then, Subaru smacked his lips while being pleased by the benefits of the plates of sweets that were introduced in succession.

The familiar baked sweets had a sweetness that vaguely ringed a bell. However, there were a lot of sweets he saw for the first time that were characteristic of this different world, too. What really impressed him in particular was the dish that looked like a steamed potato and made warm steam drift about—but the truth was that it was clearly different from a steamed potato.

[Subaru: No way, it's not just a mere steamed potato, but a.....]

[Rem: That's right, Subaru-kun. It is the baked potato dish Nee-sama and Emilia-sama came up with for Subaru-kun. Not wanting to be outdone, there were many trial and errors, and I made it.]

[Subaru: Th—the potato is melting apart in my mouth! And yet, I can still taste the sweetness on my tongue! What the hell is this! What the hell! So good! What the hell!]

[Rem: If you are that happy with it, then working it out was worth it for me, too.]

Subaru showed his praise for the bite again, continuously admiring Rem as she smiled happily.

Rem was happy about all that, and Subaru also was eating up the sweets without caring about the calories. After that, he enjoyed the after meal tea, and he pleasantly let out a sigh of satisfaction.

[Subaru: I have no complaints. It was all made so splendidly. Something like this will blow away even Nee-sama.]

[Rem: Thank you. Well then, I'll clean up now. There's still time until dinner, so stay hungry in the meantime, Subaru-kun.]

[Subaru: Yeah. It would be a problem if Ram got suspicious of the reason behind me not having dinner.]

[Rem: That's right. ....So]

Then, Rem paused, and she reached out to touch Subaru's cheek with her hand. When Subaru stiffened up in an instant, wondering what just happened, she gently moved her finger and said

[Rem: There was a tiny bread crumb. There's a possibility of Nee-sama noticing it, even if it's this small.]

[Subaru: Ah, aah, I see. Thanks a lot.]

When Subaru scratched his cheek in embarrassment, Rem brought that bread crumb towards her lips as she said "No problem". Subaru felt even more embarrassed because of her licking it like that with her tongue stuck out.

Rem, who gazed at Subaru mischievously, said

[Rem: Okay then, see you later. Subaru-kun.]

Then, her cheeks turned slightly red, and she showed him out.

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While stroking his bulged stomach that had a feeling of sweet fullness, Subaru secretly went away from the dining hall.

If he carelessly came across Ram like this, that would be the end of him. Not only did he have to be cautious with his speech and conduct, but he had to be cautious with his actions in the mansion, too. This was because Ram wasn't the only one he had to be careful of.

And he couldn't even show Rem what he was going to do now, after all.

[Emilia: —Subaru, Subaru]

Suddenly, Subaru was called out to quietly while walking with caution.

When he looked around at his surroundings, there was a room with a slightly opened door, and he saw a white hand beckoning him from it. Subaru headed towards the room in accordance with that beckoning.

And then, when he slid into the room without a sound, she said—

[Emilia: Did it work out fine? Nobody found you, right?]

[Subaru: Based off of what I saw, nobody was there. Emilia-tan, how about you?]

[Emilia: It worked out for me, too. I saw Ram far away taking in clothing, and Subaru has been with Rem, yes? So, there's no need to worry.]

The one who said that and puffed up with pride going “Ahem” was a girl with braided hair, Emilia. While giving a wry smile at that somewhat smug look, Subaru continued as he went “Still” and said

[Subaru: Why in this room? We were supposed to meet in Emilia-tan’s room.]

[Emilia: I heard what Subaru and Rem were doing in the dining hall. So, I reeeaaally couldn’t wait.....I couldn’t just stand around.]

[Subaru: Were you scared of me screwing up?]

[Emilia: I wouldn’t put it like that. But, something pretty close to that.....maybe.]

She gives a vague answer to avoid offending him, and that vague truth hurt him.

That said, they were lucky that they managed to meet up without being seen by anyone. There was a reason why Subaru and Emilia were having a secret talk like this without people knowing about it. As for what that reason was,—

[Emilia: So, has Rem noticed anything? As in, has she noticed that we’re preparing to celebrate Rem’s birthday while Rem is preparing to celebrate Ram’s birthday?]

[Subaru: That was a really complicated explanation, though that is because we are doing something complicated.]

[Emilia: I also feel like I’m going to mix up things a bit when I talk about it.]

Subaru shrugs his shoulders saying “Good grief”, while Emilia stuck her tongue out with a shy smile.

—This was the reality of the birthday parties currently happening behind the scenes at the Roswaal mansion.

Just like Ram had suggested at the beginning, people were talking about proceeding with the preparations for Rem’s birthday party. Ram should’ve been able to be an accomplice in this, being someone who became blind when it came to her younger sister.

On Rem’s end, she was under the illusion that it was related to a conspiracy that was reversing Ram’s proposal and planning a main celebration not for herself, but for Ram.

However, the ones making plans for the birthdays were actually the sisters Ram and Rem, and it was a birthday party for both of them. The sisters were both preparing for it without knowing about that.

[Subaru: Those two sure do have some bothersome personalities with this and that.....]

[Emilia: Ram and Rem both have this reeeeaally stubborn side of them, after all.]

[Subaru: In the end, that’s what it means to be sisters. They’re both exactly alike with their weird traits.]

He sighed because not only were they two peas in a pod with their looks, but they were unnecessarily alike with their stubborn sides, too.

—Rem was not the only one who was refusing to celebrate the upcoming birthday. Rem's birthday was a different case; the problem was that Ram also disapproved of celebrating herself.

Although, Ram's excuse was that she even wanted to dedicate all of the effort she put in for herself towards blessing Rem.

[Subaru: And she thinks that Rem can be happy without any qualms. Surprisingly, she doesn't get it, either.]

[Emilia: Ram thinks what Rem thinks. And Rem thinks what Ram thinks.]

[Subaru: That's how the tactics came about, though. Honestly, not knowing where I might make a stupid mistake as a double spy makes me feel nervous.....]

He wasn't rubbing his stomach while speaking just because of his full stomach from sweets. He was doing it also because of the intense stomach pain that came from the psychological warfare that was the climax of these last few days.

Seeing Subaru's state, Emilia also lowered her nicely shaped eyebrows worriedly, and she said

[Emilia: Subaru, are you okay? I would actually be fine with taking your place.....]

[Subaru: Well, I'm even making Emilia-tan lie, as you know the circumstances, and that's something you're not used to. Having to do my best to hang in there is natural, since I'm someone that meets with them a lot.]

Besides, Subaru was the one that first suggested this situation. He was suffering as a matter of course in two ways.

[Subaru: But, everything is for surprising the two of them on the day. When I think of that, trouble like this is nothing to me.]

[Emilia: Mm, yeah. This might sound inconsiderate.....but this is reeeaaally fun for me.]

[Subaru: Is Emilia-tan's path towards becoming a little demon blooming.....? This is not the time to give a metal rod to an Oni.]

[Emilia: Sorry. I don't really understand what you're getting at.]

He drops his shoulders in response to Emilia's indifferent reply. However, Emilia being there with him was more than enough to save him, since it meant that he was not alone in thinking about the two of them.

When he thought about how there was their blessing ahead of this stomach pain, he kinda felt, like, stomach heartburn.

[Subaru: And so, Emilia-tan will have to take the challenge in this pinch of time for a little longer. Don't push yourself too hard.....is what I'd like to say, but if you're going to get exposed, then push yourself.]

[Emilia: Of course, I know. Is there anything else I can do?]

[Subaru: Right. For now, how about you get pumped?]

[Emilia: Okay. Hold on a second. Mm! Okay, done.]

[Subaru: Cute.]

Subaru gets charmed by Emilia as she firmly clenched her fist, and he ended the progress report. When they were about to leave the room, they both swore to do their best in what would come up ahead, and they swung into action separately.

[Emilia: Subaru, let's make this a success, no matter what.]

[Subaru: You got it.]

They bump each other's firm fists, and Subaru watched Emilia run out of the corridor in a hurry. Emilia carefully peeks out the window, puts her ear to the floor to listen for footsteps, checks for signs of life in her surroundings as she sent lesser spirits flying, and she ran while having her whole body sparkle with light from mana.

Subaru keeps watching that appearance which was so pleasant that he couldn't help but smile, and he let out a deep sigh.

—Thinking, “Just like I thought, I feel sorry, but my judgement was right.”

[Subaru: Alright then.]

Subaru turns around, and he started walking towards the opposite side of Emilia. At this time, nearly one hour had passed since his conversation with Ram, and his break became a little long. However, that wasn't a problem he could blame. There was still another person he had to meet up with.

And if there were to be someone that would blame Subaru, that right would go to that exact person, anyways.

[Subaru: This should be it.]

He walked around the mansion unsteadily, and he felt slightly relieved from not encountering anyone while doing so. After that, Subaru touched the doorknob of a plain guest room, and he opened it. Inside there was—

[Roswaal: —Myyyyyy, you sure took a long time, Subaru-kun.]

There was a bookshelf filled with countless rows of books, and a man that looked like a clown with his back leaning against it—Roswaal L Mathers' smile greeted Subaru.

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[Roswaal: So, how'd deceiving the three of them go?]

[Subaru: ——]

[Roswaal: —? What's wrong?]

[Subaru: .....No, it's just that it feels like I've been repeating the same sort of interaction in this short time span. Once again, I'm truly understanding the feelings of guilt from being a triple spy.]

[Roswaal: Well well, I understand how you feel. Buuuut, thinking of valuable experiences, this would be one, too. Isn't it important to have fun? In fact, Emilia-sama seems to be doing so.]

Roswaal closes one eye, and with a jestful gesture he made fun of the last interaction. When that made Subaru open his eyes wide, he pointed at his own ear and said

[Roswaal: These ears are custom-made.....that was a joke, but if it's in the mansion, it's possible to hear the voices you're trying to hear. Emilia-sama's is one that stands out in particulaaaaar.]

[Subaru: I agree with that, too. Although, there's no doubt that she really is taking this seriously.]

Subaru remembered her standing out even though she was being careful to not stand out when she parted with him.

Emilia's characteristic of always being serious was a virtue, but on the other hand, she was not fit at all for things like attempting to deceive people.

And so, since she was unfit for hiding things, in replacement of Emilia—

[Subaru: —We have us, the “Beginning Four People” that will carry out the true evil scheme.]

[Beatrice: Don't just mix me into that disgraceful meeting, I suppose!]

A screechy, angry voice went over Subaru, his arms folded while making a declaration in a dignified manner. Once he took a look, the one who had a red face and shouted was a girl sitting on a stepladder in the middle of the room—it was Beatrice.

She was the caretaker of this secret talk's place, the forbidden archives, and she was one of the “Beginning Four People”.

[Beatrice: Now, what the hell is that “Beginning Four People” thing about!?!]

[Subaru: The ‘Beginning’ part was added on solely because it just felt right with the situation, but it means that we are the real accomplices. We are the people needed to make this plan a success.....that's what it means.]

[Beatrice: Grrr.....]

Beatrice had a frown that showed because of her frustration, but that didn't lead to her bringing out forceful measures to kick out Subaru and the others. That showed her dishonest personality.

[Subaru: Anyhow, thanks for coming. I'm in your debt.]

Subaru sets aside Beatrice, grinding her teeth angrily, and he turned his attention to the library. There was Beatrice sitting on a stepladder, and Roswaal leaning his back onto a bookshelf. And so now, including Subaru, there were three people that came to this room in the end. The last person was—

[Puck: —I'd appreciate it if you didn't make fun of Lia too much. Her honest side is the cutest side of them all.]

While saying that, a grey kitten—Puck made his appearance to get under Beatrice's drills. He left Emilia, and he was the last person, someone who was used to Beatrice.

Subaru, Roswaal, Beatrice, and Puck—these were the “Beginning People”.

[Subaru: Well, the one who started it was actually Ram, so we aren't the “beginning” ones all.]

[Roswaal: I don't dislike iiiit. It's way more exciting than an uncolorful title like mere accomplicees. Don't you think so, Mr. Great Spirit?]

[Puck: I feel the same way. So Betty, cheer up. Your cute face will go to waste if you keep looking angry, you know?]

[Beatrice: Hmph.....I guess I have to if Nii-chan says so, I suppose.]

Beatrice holds onto Puck gently, who was rubbing his cheek against hers, and she reluctantly accepted the situation. Once Subaru made sure of that, he clapped his hands as he said “All right!”.

[Subaru: Okay, time to sort out the current situation again. About Ram and Rem’s birthday that got a few days closer, the preparations for the party are proceeding steadily. They shouldn’t know about the plan, either. Right, Ros-chi?]

[Roswaal: You’re asking me about Ram, right? We do talk to each other every night alone. At the very least, it appears no suspicion has surfaced yet.]

[Subaru: Alright, please keep it that way, since Ram is probably the biggest obstacle to this plan.....]

There was also the barrier of Rem’s habit of being modest, but she followed the “Ram Surprise Plan”, which was a cover story, and the suspicion in her eyes was pretty much out of sight.

Simply put, the thing he had to be careful of the most was Ram’s sight. However, things were still proceeding pretty carefully thanks to Roswaal’s cooperation, who knew the sisters the best.

[Subaru: Surprisingly, thanks to Ros-chi’s cooperation, this will save some time.]

[Roswaal: I am relatively open to your ideas, you knooow. Although, it is true that I’d usually have to monitor the circumstances a lot.....and this time it’s about Ram and Rem.]

The tone with very rare deep affection makes Subaru smile slightly as he saw Roswaal in a new light.

Subaru was not the only one who treasured Ram and Rem, although that was a given.

Thinking back, he did remember Roswaal grieving over Rem's death in the loop where she died during the mabeast turmoil. He probably had so many memories from being with them for 10 years.

[Subaru: Now you just need to.....]

[Roswaal: There's no way I wouldn't be on board with an exciting proposal of a plan to hide something from Ram and Rem.]

[Subaru: As expected, that's the Ros-chi I know! So filthy!]

[Roswaal: You'll make me blush if you praise me that muuuuuch.]

Subaru plays along with Roswaal, him returning to his usual manner, and he also smiled brightly, giving a thumbs up. After that, he turned towards Beatrice, who had a sulky expression, and said

[Subaru: Goddamn. People are being smoothly united, and yet you keep acting like this.....you're gonna completely lose it when I tell you to read the atmosphere.]

[Beatrice: So it finally came out of your mouth!]

Beatrice stares at Subaru, him being unabashed, and she let out an extremely deep sigh.

[Beatrice: I'm not really accepting you saying this and that about the plan now. But, once we finish this, those three that we fooled will be angry, no doubt about it.]

[Subaru: Yeah, well, I guess. But, this is the one thing we just have to think of as necessary cost.]

Nevermind Rem, this would even make Emilia have a bad mood. And above all, Ram's anger would be as clear as day.

However, Roswaal smiled at Beatrice's and Subaru's fear and said

[Roswaal: Coooom on. Don't you know that I'll be there to apologize with you guys as well when the time comes? Besides, we are acooomplices.]

[Puck: Lia's involved too, so I'll also be there.]

Even Puck went along with Roswaal's approval; the unity was quite unexpected. Perhaps inside this evil scheme the bonds of the "Beginning Four People" deepened, and a strong sense of trust connected them together.

[Subaru: My god. It's my first time feeling like this with an evil scheme.....I'm not afraid of anything anymore.]

[Beatrice: Even if Nii-chan and Roswaal are there, the one who will be in the most trouble is you.]

[Subaru: Hehe, when that happens, you'll be there with me too, Beako.]

[Beatrice: According to your dictionary, it seems accomplice means someone you bring into your own mess, I suppose!]

Beatrice had enough of Subaru, and she shrugged her shoulders, unable to play along with his nonsense. However, if Subaru had to describe that reaction, it would not be farsightedness, but practice.

Beatrice finally adapted to the days of getting teased repeatedly—!

[Roswaal: Maybe an angry expression fits her the beeeest?]

[Subaru: Agreed.]

[Beatrice: It got done without anyone getting mad, and yet my consideration didn't even matter with you guys!]

Cheers for Beatrice, who confessed to have being cautious of getting mad.

[Subaru: Anyways, in preparation for the big day of the birthday party, from here on out I expect each of you to work your butts off! Ros-chi you have continuing to watch out for Ram. And Puck, you'll take care of Emilia,, the decoy.....or for short, you'll take care of the Decolia-tan followup. Beatrice you'll be standing by at the headquarters just like you are now.]

[Beatrice: God, go ahead and do what you want I supp.....headquarters!?!]

Beatrice's surprise from having the forbidden archives being turned into the "Beginning Four People Headquarters" gets put aside, and the three men of the Roswaal residence bump their clenched fists(Just Puck used his whole body).

—Thus, the intensity of the furious mutual celebration that circled the birthday party began to increase.

Ram knitted her brows and pondered about how people were scheming something.

The possible “people” were mainly Rem, Emilia, and incidentally, Subaru. If she were to restrict them to people that had secrets, Master Roswaal was the first one that bothered her, but him scheming something without telling anyone was just the usual. She wasn’t worried about him at this point.

And so, if there was something people besides Roswaal, AKA her younger sister and others, were hiding from her it would be——

[Ram: ——It’s a birthday party, isn’t it.]

She didn’t need to think deeply on it to understand it, but even if she didn’t, there was no other answer, anyways.

Besides, Rem’s birthday party that Ram proposed herself——putting it correctly, the intention of it was to celebrate Rem by holding a birthday party for Ram and Rem.

Everybody knew Rem was nervous of that getting carried out, but it seemed like Subaru was trying to outwit Ram, though he should’ve had the role of persuading Rem. God knows how that happened.

Whether he really was outwitting her or not was questionable, but——

[Rem: Ah, Nee-sama!]

Suddenly, Rem’s expression becomes bright in a flash, having met her at the corridor, and she ran up to her. She looked truly lovely with her sparkling eyes. Ram’s wrinkles between her eyebrows disappeared in the blink of an eye.

[Ram: Oh, what's wrong, Rem? Running in the corridor is shameful.]

[Rem: S—sorry. I couldn't help myself since I was so happy from seeing Nee-sama.....well, there isn't really any special reason why I got happy. There isn't, but oopsie.]

[Ram: .....No special reason, huh.]

[Rem: Nope, none at all! But, I don't think there needs to be any reason for me to run up to Nee-sama.....I'm not sure what I'm saying.]

Rem's energy that she had disappeared like mist, and she looked down, dispirited. While tilting her head at that situation, Ram caressed her cute sister's cheeks to comfort her.

[Ram: It's not really weird. I'm an older sister that you just want to run up to automatically, after all. I don't blame you for how you feel, Rem.]

[Rem: You're so right! Ah, Nee-sama, well then I'll see you later.....I'm looking forward to something coming up in a few days. Or well, not that I know anything about it, though.]

[Ram: .....I see.]

Rem waves her small hand, and she hurried herself out of there. Ram waved her goodbye just like she did, and when she was no longer able to see her, wrinkles appeared between her eyebrows again.

What was Rem trying to tell her with that interaction? Or maybe she should investigate what she didn't want to tell her. Ram's sisterly heart had to make a choice.

[Emilia: Ah, Ram.....]

Ram heard her name being called once again as she was getting lost in her thoughts. When Ram lifted her face, she saw Emilia walking quickly towards her. She looked around at her surroundings restlessly, and while silencing her footsteps as she carefully stepped on the floor she said

[Emilia: Can I borrow you for a second.....?]

[Ram: I don't mind, but why are you talking so quietly, Emilia-sama?]

[Emilia: You see, there's a reeeeaally important reason for that..... But, I can't talk to you about that, Ram.....ah, it wasn't just you. I can't tell Rem either.....]

[Ram: .....Oh.]

Being close enough to breath on her, Emilia spoke quietly while putting her hand on her mouth. She was certainly being careful with how loud she spoke, but Ram felt like she wasn't being careful at all with essential words and actions.

However, Emilia put Ram's thoughts aside, and as she made her bluish purple eyes sparkle she said

[Emilia: Say, Ram.....just out of curiosity...it really is just out of curiosity, but can I ask you something?]

[Ram: Depends on the question.]

[Emilia: Um, so, if...and I mean only if, okay? If I listened to one request from you, and you could get something you wanted, what would you ask for, Ram?]

[Ram: —]

Emilia's fastball that pretended to be a straight ball made Ram blank out for a moment.

Ram was certainly squinting because of the suspicion that this was some sort of instruction. However, she saw Emilia peeking at her repeatedly, and she was smiling due to her unconcealable anticipation.

Ram knew that Emilia wasn't acting because of the life she had with Emilia for half a year. In other words, Emilia wasn't scheming anything; she was just not hiding the fact that something was being schemed.

[Ram: .....Maybe acting ability.]

[Emilia: Acting ability.....like for a play? Ram, you want to have a play?]

[Ram: No, acting ability for Emilia-sama.]

[Emilia: My acting.....gosh, stop joking around with me. I am being reeeeaally serious with this question.]

[Ram: What about it being just out of curiosity?]

[Emilia: Oh! Right, it's a talk. It's a talk, but a serious talk. Nope, not sloppy at all.]

The way she went about deception was reeeeaally sloppy.

Ram was surprisingly at a loss for a reply to Emilia's serious but sloppy behavior. Irresponsibly dodging the issue here was a possibility, but wouldn't be a basic solution.

Having said that—

[Emilia: —? What's wrong?]

Innocently tilting her head, Emilia wasn't nervous at all from Ram's light pink suspicions. This was most likely the aura of not being told anything important. Emilia was delivered as a blatant decoy, and she was given practically no information—she was impressed by the good move.

[Emilia: So so? Ram, have you decided what you want?]

[Ram: I would like Emilia-sama to be a little more suspicious of the people around her.]

[Emilia: Hehe, I didn't even want you to tell jokes right now. Oh Ram, you are funny.]

[Ram: Please give me the ability to persuade.]

[Emilia: Ram, why have you only asked for abilities.....are you worried about something?]

Ram made a seriously worried look, and she wanted to let out a deep sigh. But, she was certain that sighing would cause her to worry, so she dealt with it.

[Ram: Let's see.....I'll think about it until dinner.]

[Emilia: Okay. It's reeeeaally important. So answer it seriously.]

With a look that indicated she had forgotten about the interaction from just before, Emilia seriously left her that message.

[Emilia: Ah!]

And then while she was leaving, she raised her voice as if she remembered the fact that she had to hide from people, and midway she started to walk again with soft footsteps.

[Puck: Oops.]

Just when Emilia was about to go out of her sight, she saw a kitten from a gap in her silver hair. He put his paw on his head, and he stuck his tongue out mischievously.

[Subaru: Sup, Ram. What you doing standing at a place like this.....your face, oh God!]

[Ram: Huh.....]

Ram pompously lets out the sigh she had held in, and she glared up at Subaru, who was standing next to her. When Subaru stiffened his cheeks in response to the sharpness of that look, he said

[Subaru: Wh—what happened to you? You seem so tired, and that's not like Nee-sama.]

[Ram: If this is is Barusu's scheme, I've now fallen right into your hands. Are you satisfied, Barusu?]

[Subaru: That makes me look bad, and what's up with you!?!]

[Ram: Huh!? Go ahead, push your luck all you want. I'll be the one laughing in the end.]

[Subaru: Wait wait wait wait, I don't understand. Let's calm down and talk this out, Ram.]

Once Ram smacked her lips, clearly seeing through him, and Subaru panicked as if he encountered a wounded beast. Ram felt a little better while looking at that, and when she folded her arms to hold onto her elbows she said

[Ram: Fine, I'll talk with you. —So, how's it going with Rem?]

[Subaru: Oh...oh, that's better. It's, like, progressing, but slowly. Rem is easing up little by little. It's a forceful approach, but it feels like it's just a matter of time until she breaks.]

[Ram: Yeah.]

[Subaru: Why hasn't there been any sharpness!? Is there something you're displeased with or something!?!]

[Ram: If I had to say something, it would be.....]

[Subaru: Yes?]

[Ram: Barusu's face?]

[Subaru: Mmmm! I wish you'd get used to it already and love it.....!]

Ram snorted at Subaru as he put his hands on his cheeks, his voice shaking with a horrible smile on his face.

She could've just asked Subaru directly about what he was planning here, but he probably would never confess. That showed the difference in difficulty in comparison to how it was with Emilia. Even if the situation got

bad, he would just play it off with jokes, which meant that questioning him wouldn't be effective.

[Ram: By the way, Emilia-sama seemed kinda weird. Barusu, do you know why?]

[Subaru: She seemed weird? Like how?]

[Ram: Right. She was trying to hide her fidgeting, but it wasn't hidden at all.]

[Subaru: Sounds cute just hearing it. But, I see.....not hidden at all, eh.]

In response to Ram's words, Subaru looked down listlessly. But, there was no sign of that being a heavy blow in the slight change of his expression. In other words, Emilia's behavior was taken into account now.

Nothing came out of Emilia. Most likely, nothing from Rem, either.

And so—

[Subaru: —W—what? Something wrong?]

[Ram: .....No.]

When she gave him a sidelong glance, Subaru made an openly panicked expression. Having seen that reaction right before her eyes, Ram let out a slight, fleeting sigh.

—As she thought, Subaru was most likely hiding the full story, too.

The days passed by wrapped in doubt and suspicion, and finally that day arrived.

[Rem: —Nee-sama, good morning. It's a very important morning.]

Then, there was a lovely voice that first shook Ram's eardrums, her lying down on a bed.

When she slowly opened her eyes, she noticed the bright morning sun shining in from the other side of the open curtains. And then, the appearance of Rem smiling with her head tilted came at her inside of the illuminated room.

[Ram: .....5 more minutes.]

[Rem: You can't Nee-sama. I'd like to grant Nee-sama's wish too if I could, but I can't today. Now, please wake up.]

[Ram: My goodness. I can't believe Rem is being strict with me. I'm not getting up today.]

[Rem: Ne—Nee-sama.....]

[Ram: Just kidding. Come on, Rem, help me change.]

Ram resisted being pulled forcefully by the arms. However, the moment Rem let out a slightly sad voice in response to that resistance, she woke up as if a switch was flipped.

After that, with the usual routine, she got her face wiped with a steamy towel, and she took off her nightgown as she changed into her uniform. Then she fixed her hair, and once she saw herself reflected on the full-length mirror, she was done.

[Ram: Perfect, right?]

[Rem: Yes, as expected of Nee-sama. I'm proud of you.]

In response to Rem's reply, her being in a very good mood, Ram took a look at her sister's profile. Once Ram saw her being in a good mood, looking as if she was about to even start humming, she forced herself to hold back on saying the feelings she was about to put into words.

Once she left the room with Rem, the sisters headed towards the mansion's entrance. That was where they'd meet with Subaru, and they'd confirm each other's plans for the day. It was the usual way they went about it.

However, today didn't go like that—

[Ram: .....Barusu isn't here. I suppose he's sleeping in.]

[Rem: What, no way. Subaru-kun would never sleep in.]

Rem's footsteps resound throughout the empty entrance, and she immediately objected what Ram said in a low tone. However, for some reason that objection sounded really monotone to Ram.

[Ram: —Rem?]

[Rem: \*Sniff\*, \*sniff\* .....no, Nee-sama, leave it up to me. Subaru-kun is definitely.....somewhere around here. \*Sniff\*.....]

Rem stops Ram with her hand, as she squinted with her eyes, and she started to walk while cutely sniffing with her nose.

The oni clan did develop an above average sense of smell, but at the very least, Ram's sense of smell wasn't good enough to recognize a specific scent from someone. She was seriously hoping that Rem was pretending.

Putting Ram's hopes aside, the place Rem arrived at, as she walked ahead, was the dining hall.

[Rem: Nee-sama, it seems like Subaru-kun is in here. What should we do?]

[Ram: We can just call him from out here.]

[Rem: No! We can't! Subaru-kun has really bad hearing, so he might not even notice if Nee-sama calls out to him. This is where Nee-sama should go directly inside.]

Rem gave up the place to Ram as she went "Come", and she guided her towards the door of the dining hall. Ram unconsciously got overpowered by her sister's threatening attitude, but she snorted her nose slightly before she reached for the door.

As stated before, the oni clan developed a sense of smell that was above-average. It certainly wasn't as precise as an animal's, but it was still better than humans' sense of smell.

And so, Ram's sense of smell that was better than humans' sensed a slightly sweet and warm smell coming from the gap of the dining hall's door.

[Rem: Nee-sama.]

When she looked back with her eyes, she saw Rem clenching her fist with an expression of unconcealable expectation. If she had, say, something like a dog's tail, she would've been intensely shaking it back and forth.

She couldn't betray her expectations. Ram showed a rare sight of her praying towards the heavens for that truth and her sense of duty as an older sister.

—She prayed, as she had earnestly wished for Emilia, to have that acting skill herself.

[Ram: —Barusu, are you there?]

Ram continues to speak in a natural manner, and she opened the door as she twisted the doorknob. At the other side of the door that opened slowly, she vaguely saw who was standing there—and it happened the next moment.

[Subaru: Happy birthday!]

Someone shouts in a loud voice, and confetti exploded at the same time she heard something that sounded like air bursting. That scene was familiar to her. Ram squinted her eyes. And then—

[Subaru: Hahaha, how do you like them apples? This surely surpris—]

Right beside Subaru, who who acted triumphant while laughing, an iron sphere came piercing through with tremendous force. The rotating dangerous weapon that had thorns on it just barely missed Subaru, and only the the sound of the twisting chains could be heard loudly throughout the mansion in the morning.

[Rem: S—sorry, Subaru-kun! There was a sudden loud sound, and I just.....!]

[Subaru: —]

Rem brings the iron sphere back to her, as she reflexively tried to counterattack, and she ran up to Subaru, who stiffened up. Subaru feels his body, and after making sure that he was safe, he said

[Subaru: I—I almost...died...there.....right.....?]

[Ram: I forgot to tell you, but if you try out the crackers on Rem, you might even get smashed into pieces by this girl who thought it was a surprise attack.]

[Subaru: Can you please deal with those sort of time bombs earlier!?!]

In reaction to Ram's unconcerned speaking, Subaru's voice squeaks, as he trembled from the fear of nearly dying. Ram was earnestly apologizing to the side, but Subaru felt like it was a good lesson, having gotten carried away with himself.

He kinda wanted Ram to put herself in his shoes, who kept making his worry worse up to this point.

[Ram: So, was this some kind of side show?]

[Subaru: It's not a side show. You get the gist of it, don't you? If not, then here's the trump card! Emilia-tan, do it!]

[Emilia: Leave it up to me!]

Subaru snapped his fingers to answer Ram. When he did, Emilia puffed up with pride, who was in the dining room as she responded to that sound. When she held out her graceful fingers towards the ceiling, she said

[Emilia: Puck!]

[Puck: OK, Lia. It's still morning, so I'm kinda sleepy, but let's do this with gusto!]

The gathering light takes form, and a kitten spirit appeared at Emilia's fingertips. And then, the person and the animal nod at each other, and the transmitting light completely covered the dining hall's ceiling. That light clears up. Then there was—

[Emilia: —It's an ice decoration.]

[Subaru: I designed it. The ice interior was well done too, but how about you take a look at it?]

[Rem: —! Nee-sama, could that be a picture of you and me?]

Inside of the dining hall that was engulfed in light, there were various creations of decorations formed with ice, but the one that stood out remarkably was a drawn ice painting that used the whole ceiling.

The shading was done with the use of the ice's unevenness, and the picture replicated was a portrait of the sisters.

—At a glance, you could understand that it was Ram and Rem snuggling.

[Subaru: This is a birthday party for Ram and Rem, from me, Emilia-tan, and everyone in the mansion.]

[Emilia: That's right. We worked reeeeaally hard for this day.]

[Rem: Yes! This is Nee-sama and my birthday party.....what!? I—it's mine too?]

Subaru and Emilia puff up with pride, and Rem was amazed as she almost agreed with that. It seemed like she didn't have the right idea of the situation. Rem was probably told that the birthday party was only Ram's to mislead Rem's tendency to be modest.

She had thoughts on Rem's honesty of having not noticed that and on Subaru's heinous behavior.

She had thoughts, and yet—

[Ram: —Ah]

Even if she had thoughts, the words wouldn't come out.

[Roswaal: —My oh myyyyyy, this went better than I expeeeected.]

From behind, a big palm gently held onto Ram's shoulder as she was at a loss for words. Once she turned around because of that feeling and warmth, she saw the face of a man that made her heart throb no matter how many times she saw it.

He smiles as if he saw through all of the feelings that filled Ram's heart, and he said

[Roswaal: It was difficult keeping this a secret until today. Buuuuuut, it was all worth it after I look at the face she had right now. Don't you think?]

[Subaru: Yeah, it was. You don't get to see Ram dumbfounded all that often. It was difficult, but looking back on the parts that were difficult.....]

Ram aims at Subaru's triumphant face, and she made her own crackers explode. Subaru reflexively fell over in response to the sound of air bursting and the confetti.

[Subaru: N—no way……! When in the world did you make a cracker……]

[Ram: It has a simple makeup, so I made it immediately. Incidentally, I also made it so that the scraps of paper inside would cling onto the person they got onto.]

[Subaru: So that's why it won't come off my face! Aah! I can't...I can't see!]

[Rem: Subaru-kun! Don't scratch your face so much! Let's go wash your face before it gets damaged. This way.]

Rem pulls onto Subaru's hand, him being in agony, and she started to head towards the bathroom with him. Emilia followed them from behind worriedly, but before she left the room, she turned towards Ram and said

[Emilia: Oh right, Ram. I prepared what you wanted. Haha, are you surprised?]

[Ram: What I wanted……]

After Emilia's words, her appearing to be happy, Ram turned her attention to the dining hall table. There were probably kinds of Rem's homemade pastries lined up, and she was going to take a look regardless of her sister's enthusiasm—but deep inside the table, there was something that strangely had a strong presence.

[Ram: It's a whole roasted farty pig……]

[Emilia: Ram said she wanted to eat it, so I did my best to hunt it down. Like it?]

Although it had a pitiful appearance, Ram nodded at Emilia with her pretty pro way of hunting. If she didn't, she would've felt really bad for the farty pig she chose as the random thing she wanted.

When Emilia smiled at that affirmation in satisfaction, she also chased after Subaru with lively footsteps. And then she heard screams of "Ouch ouch ouch, my face is peeling off!" coming from the bathroom.

[Beatrice: Good grief, people are being noisy early in the morning.]

[Ram: Even Beatrice-sama came.]

The one who used that moment of screaming to show up at the dining hall with an annoyed expression was Beatrice. When she looked up at Ram, who opened her eyes wide, she pouted irritably.

[Beatrice: It's not like I came here to celebrate. Besides, it has nothing to do with the party for your guys' birthday. But since it was something that was talked about so much, today's meals had to be splendid, I suppose. I just came to taste them.]

[Ram: It's not like anyone told me anything about it.]

[Beatrice: Shut up, I suppose! Just be convinced with that! Hmph!]

Beatrice stamped her feet as her straight face turned red, and she passed by Ram's side to head towards the dining table. While watching that small back, Roswaal let out a slight smile with a slip of laughter.

He was completely amused, and while being at his limit, his shoulders trembled, and he said

[Roswaal: How should I put it.....you guys are lovely.]

[Ram: .....You're evil. Roswaal-sama, you knew about most of this, didn't you?]

[Roswaal: Well, I understood that Subaru-kun's, Emilia-sama's and Rem's secrets made no sense at all. I knew it was impossible to fool your eyes.....and besides, doing such a thing was pointless.]

Roswaal shrugs his shoulders, and he said that indifferently without shame. When Ram squinted in response to those words, Roswaal went "I mean" as he left just his blue eye open of his heterochromic eyes, and he said

[Roswaal: It's about Ram. You can never underestimate Rem and the others who worked hard to do something for you. The worried profile you had these past few days was charming.]

[Ram: —Roswaal-sama said he agreed to do my idea.]

[Roswaal: I told you, didn't I? I told you that I have my own way of blessing. I'll respect your wishes. In addition, I'll have you respect mine as well. And if the wishes ever conflict with each other, it will be a competition.....in this case, it was called a mutual celebraaation.]

She suffered utter defeat. That sense of defeat makes Ram drop her shoulders. In reality, she acted just like they expected her to; there was no room to excuse her defeat.

Ram didn't reject Rem, Emilia, and incidentally Subaru's kindness.

That's why she felt there was surely no choice but to celebrate.

[Roswaal: You're thinking too hard on it. It might be hard for you as someone who sees anything and everything too clearly, but you should be kinder to yourself.]

[Ram: If so, then it would be best for Roswaal-sama to do that.]

[Roswaal: Oh, that hit me where it huuuuurts.]

Roswaal gives a wry smile. Ram felt warmth in that wry smile, and she treated it as the bargain for her sense of defeat.

[Beatrice: Hmph, if this is the younger sister's cooking.....this looks very weird, I suppose.]

When she looked, she saw Beatrice complaining about something with a plate in her hand while she was searching the dining hall. She had stuff like Rem's homemade baked sweets on the plate she held, but she was looking at a different corner of the table.

Beatrice saw ugly cooking and sweets lined that didn't appear to be Rem's, just like she said, and

[Ram: —It would be weird to make Rem do all the cooking for her own birthday celebration, after all.]

Ram mutters that, and she brought that ugly dish, the cooking that appeared to have used steamed potatoes, to her mouth.

[Ram: Yuck.]

Ram licks her lips with her pink tongue, and she let out those thoughts.

And then the only ones who saw Ram's face while making kind smiles were Roswaal and Beatrice.

[Subaru: Oi, Ram! That was a close one! I almost lost my face!]

[Ram: I might've been able to stand looking at you if you had. That's a pity.]

[Subaru: You'd be able to look at me if I had no face, you say, do you really hate my face that much!? Love it!]

Ram snorted her nose as she went "Huh" in response to Subaru's complaint, who came back from the bathroom. There was no sign of the gentle behavior she had from earlier as she acted like she usually would.

Roswaal takes notice of that, and he was the only one who shrugged his shoulders as if saying it couldn't be helped.

[Emilia: So, Ram, how's the roasted farty pig? Is it good enough?]

[Ram: Sorry, Emilia-sama. Meat dishes aren't really my forte.....]

[Subaru: Then why did you say that you wanted this!?]

She frankly confessed that she wasn't good with pitiful farty pigs. Ram left dealing with the pig up to Subaru and Emilia, and she decided to fully enjoy the potato dish.

That's how the buffet party, and gradually, the birthday party, began—

[Rem: —Nee-sama]

Standing next to her, Rem quietly took a look at her expression. She took a look while having the guilt from having hid something from her, and the expectations of what Ram thought about this birthday party.

[Rem: Nee-sama, happy birthday.]

Like that, Rem smiled. Ram smiled back at Rem as well as she smiled.

[Ram: Yes, happy birthday to you too, Rem. —I'm really, just so happy that Rem is my sister.]

Ram gave the blessing words to Rem with the endless love that came from her heart.

[Everyone: —Happy birthday!!]

And then right after that, the blessing words flew about in the Roswaal residence.

—Because this day was a birthday. It's the one day in the year when anyone can become the protagonist.

